

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 06 PANAMA 000338

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CEN  
WHA/PPC MICHAEL PUCETTI  
G/TIP ANTHONY ETERNO CARLA MENARES BURY  
A/LM/AQM/IP JOANNA PISCOTTA SNEARLY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [ELAB](#) [FAID](#) [KWMN](#) [KCRM](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [SMIG](#) [PM](#)

SUBJECT: PANAMA RESPONSE TO TIP PROTECTION (ESF) PROPOSAL

SOLICITATION

REF: A. 04 STATE 265981

[1B.](#) 04 STATE 247994

-----  
SUMMARY  
-----

[11.](#) (U) Embassy is pleased to submit three anti-TIP bilateral project proposals (including two from the same government ministry), chosen from five submissions. Since the passage of the GOP's groundbreaking anti-TIP law in March 2004, the GOP has worked hard with its limited resources to promote citizen awareness of the new law and to provide services to the victims identified through the law's implementation. Embassy is confident that the following bilateral proposals will create a sustainable increase in TIP prevention and victims' services. The institutions involved already have taken marked steps to implement the new law on a shoe-string budget. Also, the new law provides for a special funding source that post expects will be fully functional as the projects end. A list of the unsubmitted projects will be sent by electronic mail, as per reftel A.

-----  
PROJECT #1  
-----

[12.](#) (U) Name of the Project: "Optimizing Victim Attention by Improving Expertise and Coordination in Sex Crime Cases." This is post's top funding priority.

[13.](#) (U) Name of Government Agency: Attorney General's Office, specifically the Public Ministry (Prosecutor's Office) and Judicial Technical Police (PTJ).

[14.](#) (U) Objective: Optimize attention and minimize stress to TIP victims by elevating an entire prosecutor's office to the status of "Specialized Prosecutor's Office for Sex Crimes" and integrating it with the PTJ's Sex Crimes Unit.

[15.](#) (U) Duration of the Project: 18 months.

-----  
JUSTIFICATION  
-----

[16.](#) (U) Victims of sex trafficking are easily "re-victimized" by the justice system if the investigators and prosecutors who work their cases are not trained in or do not have the vocation for interviewing victims. Similarly, victims suffer if they are forced to constantly repeat their stories as they struggle through an endless maze of bureaucrats unable to orient them to assistance resources.

[17.](#) (SBU) Despite having several prosecutors and investigators trained in and with the vocation for working trafficking cases, Panama's criminal justice bureaucracy needs to be restructured to better serve victims. Since March 2004, both PTJ investigators and individual prosecutors have the authority to open investigations into sexual trafficking cases. Unfortunately, cases worked by the PTJ Sex Crime Unit are often assigned to prosecutors who have no specialization in this area. Prosecutors with a specialization in sex crimes are burdened with case loads in other areas. Prosecutors with no experience in sex crimes open investigations without help from the PTJ's specialized sex crimes unit. Victims fortunate enough to have the assistance of expert investigators and prosecutors still must shuttle from an overcrowded and dingy PTJ office to a similar prosecutor's office, repeating their stories with almost no privacy. Placing authority for all TIP cases in a specialized prosecutor's office near the PTJ Sex Crime Unit is critical to making sure that victims are empowered, rather than "re-victimized" by the system.

[18.](#) (U) Activities:

- Take an entire prosecutor's office and turn it into a Specialized Prosecutor's Office for Sex Crimes for the entire country.

- Integrate the Specialized Prosecutor's Office with the PTJ Sex Crimes Unit.

- Name Prosecutor Maruquel Castroverde as Special Sex Crimes Prosecutor. (Castroverde, who helped pass the new anti-TIP law, has expertise in investigating and prosecuting TIP cases and in working with TIP victims).

- Remodel office space (to integrate PTJ staff, create private interview areas, and victim reception areas).

- Add, equip, and train two additional assistants for the Specialized Prosecutor (to assist the Specialized Prosecutor in the training and supervision of all investigators and prosecutors working sex crimes cases within Panama).

- Train prosecutors and investigators involved in trafficking cases (emphasizing skills in working with victims and drawing on lessons learned from Costa Rican counterparts)

- Publish and distribute pamphlets (to prevent trafficking and to inform victims of services).

- Design and introduce a legal proposal to give prosecutors more tools to prosecute TIP cases that do not involve sexual exploitation. (bringing these TIP victims under the attention of the Specialized Prosecutor's Office).

- Assign only investigators and prosecutors to work TIP cases who have a vocation for working with TIP victims.

**¶9. (SBU) Sustainability:** This project will permanently improve treatment of TIP victims by permanently enhancing the method of assigning TIP cases to prosecutors, the structure and case load of a prosecutor's office, and interview rooms and reception areas. Most of the project funds are for start-up costs associated with changing the facilities, equipment, and training needed to make the Specialized Prosecutor's Office and its personnel fully functional and responsive to victim's needs. Panama's new anti-TIP law also provides for a commission, CONAPREDES, empowered with an independent tax source for training, prevention, and victim's assistance. Once the commission is fully functional and begins to accumulate funds (the new Attorney General convoked CONAPREDES on February 15 (see septel)), the Specialized Prosecutor's Office can seek funding to maintain and improve its assistance to victims. Embassy expects that implementation of the new tax and accumulation of funds will take approximately one year. Panama's new Attorney General told Embassy that addressing TIP issues, particularly in Darien province, is one of her top priorities. Prosecutor Castroverde and the PTJ's Sex Crimes Unit have already taken steps to improve prevention and protection of victims under the new anti-TIP law without special funding.

**¶10. (U) Performance Indicators:** Creation of a Specialized Prosecutor's Office integrated with the PTJ Sex Crimes Unit, number of private interview rooms, number of victims rescued and placed in shelters or substitute families, number of personnel trained in attention to victims, and number of TIP cases investigated by the PTJ Sex Crimes Unit and prosecuted under the supervision of the Specialized Prosecutor's Office.

**¶11. (U) Evaluation Plan:** Representatives from Embassy will meet with the Special Sex Crimes Prosecutor and investigators from the PTJ Sex Crimes Unit every four months to verify integration of the offices, review the status of the cases detected, and identify critical areas of the country where TIP (whether or not involving commercial sexual exploitation) is a problem. The Specialized Prosecutor's Office will present a final report of its achievements in providing victim's assistance under the new anti-TIP law and any other new anti-TIP laws.

**¶12. (U) Budget/Government Contribution:** The Attorney General's Office is requesting \$114,000. The Attorney General will devote at least the entire 15th Circuit's Prosecutor's Office, with an actual annual budget of \$107,100 (or \$160,650 for 18 months). While appointment as a Special Prosecutor generally involves a substantial increase in salary, Prosecutor Maruquel Castroverde has agreed to go forward with organizing the office and training personnel in these cases without the additional \$44,000 in salary and representational funds that would ordinarily come with the position of Specialized Prosecutor. The PTJ's Sex Crime Unit's annual budget is approximately \$750,000. The following is a budget breakout:

Remodel Facilities	\$30,000
Assistant Equipment	\$14,000
Office Equipment	\$ 6,000

Two Assistants - 18 mos. \$30,000

at half salary

Training

Panama City	\$ 9,000
Provinces, Costa Rica	\$25,000
	-----
	\$114,000

¶13. (U) Proposed Funding Mechanism: Cooperative agreement.

¶14. (U) Embassy Point of Contact: Debra Steigerwalt, Political Office, (507) 207-7183, SteigerwaltDA@state.gov.

¶15. (U) Other Donors: The Attorney General's Office has received technical assistance in the past in combating TIP from the International Labor Organization and the Spanish Embassy.

-----  
Project #2  
-----

¶16. (U) Project Title: "Protection and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation." This is post's second funding priority.

¶17. (U) Name of Government Agency: Ministry of Youth, Women, Children and the Family (MINJUMFA) - Office of Childhood and Adoption. (Note: MINJUMFA also submitted a prevention project, Project #3).

¶18. (U) Duration of Project: A new, one-year project.

¶19. (U) Objectives:

- Assist TIP victims by creating secure TIP shelters staffed by social, psychological, and legal specialists.
- Improve civil society's and foster families' ability to assist TIP victims.

-----  
JUSTIFICATION  
-----

¶20. (SBU) Panama's March 2004 anti-TIP law increased law enforcement capabilities and prohibited additional TIP activities. As a result, MINJUMFA has had to work hard, despite limited resources, to provide immediate services to new victims. The new victims differ from the abused and abandoned children MINJUMFA usually helps. TIP victims are often older, have suffered sexual trauma, confront a complex legal process, are located in remote locations, or face retaliation from criminal elements.

¶21. (SBU) Although MINJUMFA has one 40-person shelter and cooperates with a non-governmental shelter, these shelters are full with abused and abandoned children. When not full, the shelters are not structured to meet the needs of TIP victims. Moreover, shelter staff are not trained in special protocols for victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Although MINJUMFA has placed TIP victims with foster families, such families lack specialized training to assist TIP victims.

¶22. (SBU) Moreover, despite the fact that a 1998 Panamanian law gives victims the right to participate actively in the prosecution of their cases, MINJUMFA lacks resources to provide legal assistance. MINJUMFA believes there are as many as 100 child and adolescent victims of TIP (child commercial exploitation) in the Darien region alone who need victim assistance. Nonetheless, MINJUMFA lacks a full understanding of the scope and nature of TIP victims in Panama.

¶23. (U) Activities:

- Remodel MINJUMFA's child shelter to accommodate TIP victims.
- Construct a 50-person shelter for child TIP victims on the campus of NGO shelter Casa Malambo. (Casa Malambo's pleasant campus includes psychological assistance, a clinic, a primary school, and pool).
- Train foster families in assistance to TIP victims.
- Train MINJUMFA and shelter staff in assistance to TIP victims.
- Coordinate with relevant government and civil society groups.
- Provide legal assistance to victims in the prosecution of their cases. (Panamanian law allows victims an active role in prosecution).

- Provide social and psychological assistance to victims.
- Profile the nature of TIP victims.
- Conduct pre-treatment and post-treatment evaluations.

**124.** (U) Sustainability: The project will permanently increase shelter space and institutional capacity for assisting TIP victims at MINJUMFA and at Casa Malambo. (Casa Malambo is a well established NGO with an annual budget of approximately \$650,000, only 20% of which is subsidized by MINJUMFA. The Director of Casa Malambo also also sits on CONAPREDES, the new anti-TIP commission.) Moreover, the new anti-TIP law requires MINJUMFA to provide legal assistance to TIP victims and MINJUMFA traditionally provides services to abused minors. When the CONAPREDES fund is fully functional (see para 9 above), MINJUMFA can solicit additional funds for victim's assistance. Despite a shoe-string budget, MINJUMFA already provides services to victims under the new anti-TIP law. In addition, MINJUMFA is member of networks that will help sustain its actions, including the Committee for the Eradication of Child Labor and the Ombudsman's Network to Combat Commercial Sexual Exploitation.

**125.** (U) Performance Indicators: Number of beds available to TIP victims at shelters; number of victims in the program (including victims not staying at the shelters); number of TIP victims receiving legal, psychological, and social services; results of pre-treatment and post-treatment evaluations; and final evaluation results.

**126.** (U) Evaluation Plan: The Director of MINJUMFA's Child and Adoption Office, the project coordinator, and a representative from Casa Malambo will meet with Embassy personnel every three months to review performance indicators. The program will conduct a final evaluation.

**127.** (U) Budget Breakout/Host Government Contribution: The requested funding is \$126,624, but does not include MINJUMFA's provision of technical assistance, transportation, and a new help/support line for abuse victims. MINJUMFA is also purchasing a vehicle to transport service providers to victims. Moreover, MINJUMFA provides approximately \$130,000 per year in funding to the non-profit shelter Casa Malambo. The project proposes using students studying social work, psychology, and law to help implement the project.

Remodel MINJUMFA's Victim Center:	\$10,000
Build TIP Shelter at Casa Malambo:	\$50,000
Staff Training	\$ 3,000
Studies	\$ 3,500
Administrative Personnel	\$ 3,600
Program Coordinator	\$ 8,400
Social Workers	\$ 7,200
Students in Social Work	\$ 0
Psychologists	\$ 7,200
Psychology students	\$ 0
Lawyers	\$ 9,600
Law Students	\$ 0
Equipping Victim's Center	\$10,342
Office Supplies	\$ 8,200
Teaching Materials	\$ 5,600
-----	
	\$126,624

**128.** (U) Proposed Funding Mechanism: Cooperative agreement.

**129.** (U) Embassy Point of Contact: Debra Steigerwalt, Political Office, (507) 207-7183, SteigerwaltDA@state.gov.

**130.** (U) Other Donors: Under the project, the non-profit shelter Casa Malambo will incorporate shelter facilities for TIP victims onto its campus. Casa Malambo's annual budget is approximately \$650,000, 20% of which is subsidized by MINJUMFA. MINJUMFA will also seek technical assistance from the International Labor Organization.

-----  
PROJECT #3  
-----

**131.** (U) Title of Project: "Campaign Against Sexual Commercial Exploitation of Children and Adolescents"

**132.** (U) Name Of Recipient Government Agency: MINJUMFA - Women's Office. (Note: MINJUMFA also submitted a protection project, Project #2).

**133.** (U) Duration of the Project: April 2005 - December

**12005.** Supplements ongoing TIP prevention program.

**134.** (U) Objectives:

- Create anti-TIP awareness, especially with hotel, restaurant, tourist, and nightclub establishments; public transportation, security, and government officials; and civil society.

- Disseminate information about the March 2004 anti-TIP law, especially the provisions against child sexual exploitation.

**135. (SBU) Justification:** Panama's March 2004 anti-TIP law requires MINJUMFA to take measures to prevent TIP. Despite limited resources and disruption due to a change in government, in November MINJUMFA conducted an intergovernmental forum to study the best approach to TIP prevention. In November, MINJUMFA also launched a campaign to publicize the new anti-TIP law and the problem of commercial sexual exploitation of children. MINJUMFA discovered during its campaign that the tourist and entertainment sectors resisted informing their patrons about the new law. MINJUMFA believes Panama is at a crucial time for TIP prevention, as it pushes to become a preferred tourist destination and seeks to avoid entrenched problems with TIP tourism experienced by some of its neighbors. The project will permit MINJUMFA to make its anti-TIP campaign more comprehensive and bring special attention to sectors resistant to prevention. The project will also set a high standard for prevention programs once the new law's special anti-TIP funding is implemented (see paragraph 9).

**136. (U) Activities:**

- Design campaign materials.
- Conduct press conferences at airports, ports, and frontier areas.
- Distribute anti-TIP tourist postcards at airports, ports, and frontier areas.
- Place TIP awareness ads at the GOP's bus stop kiosks in Panama City.
- Distribute promotional items (hats, T-shirts, etc.) in tourist sector establishments.
- Create accords with tourist sector establishments to continue to warn clients about TIP.
- Distribute a popular version of the new anti-TIP law.
- Conduct a radio campaign (to reach the largest audience).
- Hold an anti-TIP Folk Rhymes Contest (to target the rural population).
- Transmit TIP victim human interest stories.
- Conduct a TV-spot campaign (that examines masculine values that create TIP).
- Place anti-TIP banners strategically.

**137. (SBU) Sustainability:** MINJUMFA started a prevention campaign on its own initiative, is required by law to prevent public sexual exploitation, and will be able to solicit funds for prevention programs from the new anti-TIP commission once the commission's anti-TIP fund is fully functional (see paragraph 8). MINJUMFA has a sustainable strategy: to develop agreements with hotels, clubs, and transportation companies to continue distributing prevention literature to their patrons. Also, at the end of the program MINJUMFA will have campaign material designs that it can continue to use.

**138. (U) Performance Indicators:** Distribution of 34,000 promotional items; 20,000 posters, 100,000 post cards; 129 public ads; and 5,000 copies of a popular version of the anti-TIP law; transmission of 2,160 15-second radio spots on 6 stations and 284 television spots; recording of Folk Rhymes; transmission of victim stories; and mid-term and final evaluations.

**139. (U) Evaluation Plan:** MINJUMFA will contract a consultant to design the campaign and perform mid-term and final evaluations and will meet with U.S. Embassy personnel regarding the project every 3 months. (MINJUMFA suggested the use of an outside contractor to evaluate the program because of the technical material involved and because the European Union required an outside evaluator for a past project).

**140. (U) Budget Breakout/Host Government Contribution.** MINJUMFA is requesting \$151,300 and will contribute \$65,132. The total cost of the project is \$216,432. In addition, the MINJUMFA will contribute use of the GOP's public notice areas at bus stops throughout Panama City.

**1A. Amount Requested:** \$151,300

PLANNING	
Campaign Plan	\$15,000

Popular Version of new law \$ 2,000  
Folk Rhyme Prizes \$ 5,000

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN  
Printing/publicity \$31,900  
Promotional items \$19,900  
Television ads \$49,500  
Radio Ads \$ 9,000  
Print Media \$ 9,000

CAMPAIGN EVALUATION \$ 5,000

**1B.** Government Contribution: \$65,432

Technical Team \$43,200  
Secretarial Team \$ 5,352  
Transportation Costs \$ 6,000  
Office Materials \$ 6,180  
Per Diem \$ 1,400  
Video history \$ 3,000

**141.** (U) Proposed Funding Mechanism: Cooperative agreement.

**142.** (U) Embassy Point of Contact: Debra Steigerwalt,  
Political Office, (507) 207-7183, SteigerwaltDA@state.gov.

**143.** (U) Other Donors: MINJUMFA received technical assistance  
from the International Labor Organization and funding from  
the United Nations Population Fund for the initial stages of  
its campaign and will request UN assistance with additional  
publicity materials.

WATT